LISTING OF CLAIMS

(no amendments have been made)

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously presented) A positive photoresist composition formed by dissolving (A) photosensitive novolak resin comprising an alkali soluble novolak resin wherein 3 to 7 mol% of hydrogen atoms within those of all phenolic hydroxyl groups of the alkali soluble novolak resin are substituted by 1,2-naphthoquinone diazide sulfonyl groups, wherein the alkali soluble novolak resin before substitution by 1,2-naphthoquinone diazide sulfonyl groups has been fractionated by weight to produce a degree of dispersion of 2.2 to 2.8, in (B) an organic solvent comprising 70 to 90% by weight of a propylene glycol alkyl ether acetate, and ethyl lactate.

14. (Previously presented) The positive photoresist composition according to claim 13, wherein the alkali soluble novolak resin before substitution by 1,2-naphthoquinone diazide sulfonyl groups has the following characteristics (1) and (2):

(1) a polystyrene equivalent weight average molecular weight of 1000 to 30000, and

(2) a rate of solution to a 2.38 % by weight TMAH (tetra-methyl ammonium hydroxide) aqueous solution at 23°C is 10 to 1000Å/s.

15. (Previously presented) The positive photoresist composition according to claim 13, wherein the propylene glycol alkyl ether acetate is propylene glycol methyl ether acetate.

16. (Previously presented) The photoresist composition according to Claim 13, wherein 3 to 5 mol% of hydrogen atoms within those of all phenolic hydroxyl groups of the alkali soluble novolak resin are substituted by 1,2-naphthoquinone diazide sulfonyl groups.

17. (Previously presented) The photoresist composition according to Claim 13, which further comprises (C) an alkali soluble acrylate resin.

18. (Previously presented) The positive photoresist composition according to claim 17, wherein the alkali soluble acrylate resin (C) comprises 30 to 90% by weight of a

constitutional unit derived from a polymerizable compound which has an ether linkage and 50 to 2% by weight of a constitutional unit derived from a polymerizable compound which has a carboxyl group.

19. (Previously presented) The positive photoresist composition according to claim 17, wherein the molecular weight of the alkali soluble acrylate resin (C) is 10,000 to 800,000.

20. (Previously presented) The positive photoresist composition according to claim 17, wherein the amount of the alkali soluble acrylate resin (C) is more than 3 to 20% by weight, based on the photosensitive novolak resin (A).

21. (Previously presented) A resist pattern formation method comprising: coating a positive photoresist composition according any one of Claims 13 to 20 on a substrate; prebaking the coated film; selectively exposing the film; and subsequently alkali developing the film.